

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Literature is a broad term for written works, especially those considered of high quality and artistic value, which transmit culture, explore human experiences, and convey ideas through various genres. Literature is the portrayal of human life as it describes human behavior, emotions, and psychological complexities. Meanwhile, psychology is the specific study of the human mind and behavior. According to Yimer (2019), literature and psychology share a commonality, as both scientific fields focus on studying human motivations. While psychology studies human behavior and its underlying reasons, literature, in turn, depicts human behavior through fiction. Building on this connection, psychology can help us to understand the characters' motivations in literary works.

This study analyzes the characters in the novel *Ugly Love*, with a particular focus on the main characters who represent humans' motivation, behaviors, and emotions. As Royle (2004) said, characters are the life of literature; they are the object of our curiosity and fascination, affection and dislike, admiration and condemnation. Moreover, the issues experienced by characters mirror real human life in their nature to develop and face some experiences, such as psychological issues, emotional problems, self-growth, and self-actualization. In this case, the writer analyzes the main characters, specifically examining the representation of the human hierarchy of needs in the novel *Ugly Love*.

Humans have basic needs that must be fulfilled in their lives, including eating, drinking, sleeping, and other essential activities. Fulfillment in this research refers to the completion or satisfaction of any psychological or emotional need. An individual is considered to fulfill a

need when they experience emotional stability, personal growth, or behavioral change that aligns with a particular level in the hierarchy. For example, the hierarchy of needs, a motivational theory developed by Abraham Maslow, is used by some literary scholars as a framework for analyzing the motivations and behaviors of characters in fiction. Based on the hierarchical order of human motivation, Maslow's theory is applicable for interpreting and discussing characterization, narratives, and symbolic meaning in literature.

In contemporary fiction, many authors explore psychological issues such as trauma, love, and healing through emotionally charged narratives. One of the most prominent figures in this genre is Colleen Hoover, a bestselling American author known for her emotionally intense and psychologically complex romance novels. According to CNN (2023), Colleen Hoover is one of the best authors of romance and women's fiction on The New York Times Best Sellers list. Her novels have won the Goodreads Choice Award for Best Romance multiple times, including *Confess* in 2015, *It Ends With Us* in 2016, and *Without Merit* in 2017. In her blog, Hoover stated that her work typically falls within the New Young Adult contemporary romance and psychological thriller categories (Hoover, 2023).

However, many of Hoover's works have been controversial because they often present themes of love and romance, but the stories frequently serve the opposite purpose, focusing on pain, trauma, and abuse. Thus, Hoover's works are often referred to as dark romance. Even so, her works have an impact on the romance genre, which can reflect the stories in her novels about contemporary romance, such as toxic relationships, personal struggles, the complexities of relationships, and personality dynamics, to a new generation of readers. The novel *Slammed* (2011) is Hoover's first work and was published in 2012. One of the best works by Hoover is *It Ends with Us* (2016). It is a bestselling novel and debuted at the top of the New York Times bestseller list in 2022. The other Hoover's work that explores love and emotional depth is *Ugly*

Love, published in 2014. It is one of Hoover's first novels and has amassed over 1.4 million reviews. *Ugly Love* was nominated for the Best Romance in the Goodreads Choice Award in 2014.

Ugly Love raises the theme of romance and deep emotions in the story. It is seen in the portrayal of the main characters. Miles, who is a pilot and has a closed-off and cold personality, meets Tate, a nursing postgraduate student who is ambitious, dedicated, and career-oriented. The encounter between Tate and Miles is when she moves in with her brother, Corbin, who is also Miles's best friend, co-worker, and neighbor. Their relationship begins with a strong physical attraction, and Tate is drawn to Miles's mysterious and reserved personality. As the story progresses, Tate is involved in a complicated, emotionally charged, and no-string-attached relationship with Miles since he sets clear boundaries for their relationship and insists on keeping things purely physical. Miles fears feeling love again because of his guilt about his past. He has a past traumatic event that caused him to lose two people he loved the most. Meanwhile, Tate begins to realize her feelings for Miles and tries to dig deeper into his personality. She develops deep feelings for Miles and struggles with the one-sided love of their relationship.

This study examines the perspective of Abraham Maslow to explore how the two main characters in *Ugly Love* fulfill the aspects of their human needs. The importance of analyzing the novel with this theory lies in linking literary analysis to psychology. It emphasizes the role of humanistic psychology in analyzing literary works. This analysis also investigates emotional trauma, relationships, and self-respect, which influence the fulfillment of the needs towards the highest level of self-actualization. Thus, this study delves more deeply into the literature on human motivation, emotional fulfillment, healing, and acceptance. From this perspective and

analysis, the work is not just a romantic story, but also a study of humans, motivation, and resilience.

1.2. Identification of Problem

This analysis explores the representation of the main characters in Hoover's *Ugly Love*, Miles and Tate, from the perspective of Abraham Maslow. Miles' character, who lives in pain and trauma, refuses to be in a relationship or even to embrace love. Meanwhile, Tate, who has loved Miles, shows the struggle to achieve the love and belonging needs that lead to emotional dependence. Emotional conflict and romantic experiences complicate their basic human needs, raising questions about how unmet needs will affect their behavior, relationships, and interactions. The problem lies in unfulfilled needs, specifically the needs for love and belonging.

1.3. Review of Related Study

To support this research, the writer consulted several related studies that discuss the same object, issues, and theories, as well as the work in question. The purpose is to gain a more profound understanding of the analysis.

The first related study is an article by Luh Putu Triariningsih et al. "The Personality of the Main Character in A Novel *Ugly Love* in Traverse Journal. In this article, Triariningsih et al. analyzed the novel *Ugly Love* by Colleen Hoover, which focuses on the main character's personality. The analysis applied the theory of personal traits by McCrae and Costa (1992). This article found that the characters of Miles are angry, sensitive, and curious; meanwhile, the characters of Tate are panicky, sensitive, jealous, and nervous (Triariningsih et al., 2023).

This article contributes to the current research by analyzing the same novel. After reading this research, it was found that the article primarily focuses on identifying Miles and Tate's characters. Meanwhile, the current research analyzes the character's basic needs as human beings by using a psychological approach.

The following research article is "Miles' Trauma in Colleen Hoover's *Ugly Love*" by Anindya Lintang Pancarani and Danu Wahyono in *Sabda Jurnal Sastra dan Bahasa*. In this article, Pancarani and Wahyono analyzed the cause and the effect of trauma experienced by Miles as the main character. The study used a psychological approach with a qualitative method.

This article identified three causes of Miles's trauma, they are interpersonal and relationship experiences, a one-time event, and loss and sadness (Pancarani & Wahyono, 2024). It is mentioned that Miles's initial character when he was 24 years old is confident, bright, and easy-going. However, Miles experiences trauma after an accident that resulted in the loss of two of his most loved ones, Rachel and his newborn child. Miles faces the reality of how quickly everything can change. Furthermore, this article also examines the impact of Miles' trauma. First, relationship issues. The article found that Miles has avoided dating or any relationship for years since the accident. Another effect is emotional, where he often appears angry, denies his emotions, and struggles to move on.

This article contributes to the current research since it discusses the same novel. Additionally, it examines the causes and effects of the trauma of the male character. Thus, it helps the current research to get a more comprehensive insight into Miles's internal conflict, making the analysis of Tate's struggle to fulfill her need for love and belonging more evident.

The following research is the article “Self-Actualization in Hierarchy of Needs of a Self in Meg Cabot’s *The Princess Diary*.” by Raflis and Oktaviane in the JILP Journal. This article discusses self-actualization and self-esteem that focuses on the confidence and self-image of the main character in Meg Cabot's novel *The Princess Diaries*.

The article states that Mia can fulfill her physiological needs, particularly food, since she is a princess from a small, wealthy country. She has a bodyguard, gets along with her family, and is well-liked by her friends, which indicates her fulfillment of safety needs. However, Mia's self-esteem is initially low, and she frequently complains about herself (Raflis & Oktaviane, 2018). Mia lacks confidence and feels her existence is not interesting. Finally, Mia gained self-esteem and slowly found her self-confidence. Self-confidence allows her to accept herself and embrace her imperfections.

This article contributes to my research by applying the same theory Abraham Maslow used to explore the hierarchy of needs. It aids current research in understanding the application of the hierarchy of needs in literary works. However, the distinction between this article and the current research lies in the object and focus. This article discusses Meg Cabot's *The Princess Diaries*, focusing on self-esteem to explore the character's self-actualization. Meanwhile, my research analyzes Colleen Hoover's *Ugly Love*, focusing on the main character's needs for belonging and love.

Last, the article written by Ghozali entitled “The Fulfillment of Hierarchy of Needs of Elinor in *Sense and Sensibility* Novel by Jane Austen: A Study of Humanistic Psychology by Abraham Maslow”. In this article, Ghozali examined how Elinor’s character fulfilled the five levels of hierarchy of needs and whether she could achieve them sequentially and meet all the desired needs.

The article's findings indicated that Elinor can effectively address her family's problems and fulfill her basic needs. Her physiological and safety needs are satisfied as she can get a house for her family. In the article, Ghozali (2020) said that the struggle to fulfill the needs of love and belongingness is very dominant. Elinor loves Edward, and he seems to love Elinor too, but his closed attitude makes Elinor doubt that he has the same feelings, and she finally gives up on her own feelings. Although Elinor clings to her failed love, she eventually finds happiness and marries Edward. However, self-actualization is not described in the novel. It explores the mother-child relationship, a love story, and the pursuit of happiness at the end.

This article makes a significant contribution to current research by examining the hierarchy of needs of the female character in the novel. It helps to get a better understanding of how physical and emotional struggles contribute to achieving the hierarchy of needs. In addition, the results regarding love and belongingness provide deeper insight into the struggle to fulfill these needs, which will help inform the current research.

1.4. Research Questions

Ugly Love presents complex emotional and psychological conflicts in fulfilling the needs of the main characters. Therefore, formulating research questions allows analysis to understand the relationship between the characters' experiences, their emotional development, and the broader psychological framework that supports the narrative. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do the main characters in the novel represent different stages of Maslow's hierarchy of needs?
2. What are the effects of the unfulfilled needs of the main characters?

1.5. Objective of the Research

The primary purpose of this research is to analyze how Colleen Hoover's *Ugly Love* demonstrates the fulfillment of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the obstacles in achieving it by examining the psychological growth of the characters, Miles Archer and Tate Collins.

More specifically, this research aims to:

1. Identify how Maslow's five levels of needs are portrayed in the psychological and emotional experiences of the two main characters.
2. Examine the effects of unmet needs, particularly the disruption of love and belonging.

1.6. Scope of the Research

The research focuses on two main characters, Miles and Tate that could limit the exploration of other perspectives or subplots in the novel. Their critical roles in the characters' emotional and psychological development are portrayed throughout the novel *Ugly Love*. Without these two characters, the story and the psychological issue would not exist in the same way. This research focuses on the psychological journey for self-growth of the characters as individuals. Both characters serve as focal points through which the key themes of the story, grief, love, trauma, healing, and self-worth, are explored in depth. In addition to analyzing the five levels of needs, this research also emphasizes the love and belongingness needs as the central conflict of the story.